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 TAGS: [NI](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GV](#) [ECOWAS](#)  
 SUBJECT: (C) NIGERIA: MADUEKWE AGREES ON BNC, DISAGREES ON  
 IWU

Classified By: AF A/S Johnnie Carson. Reason 1.4 (b),(d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: AF Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson and Nigerian Foreign Minister Ojo Maduekwe met in Washington on November 10 and agreed to the working groups that will comprise an upcoming U.S.-Nigerian Binational Commission (BNC), but disagreed on the need to quickly replace Independent National Election Commission (INEC) Chair Maurice Iwu. Maduekwe agreed that Nigerian political and military observers may be needed in Guinea and said he would raise the issue with President Yar'Adua. END SUMMARY.

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 ELECTIONS  
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12. (C) Maduekwe expressed condolences to Carson for the deaths at Fort Hood, and asked for Carson's understanding of the situation in Afghanistan. Maduekwe then presented a copy of a new book of his selected speeches to Carson. When Carson joked that he would scour the book for quotes to use against him, Maduekwe laughingly obliged by reading aloud a passage that warned of dire consequences for Nigeria if it did not have credible elections that met universal norms.

13. (C) Maduekwe described President Yar'Adua as determined to improve elections, saying there was a "national consensus" that Nigeria was being denied an international role because of past election fraud. Maduekwe attributed election problems not to the country's laws or the attitudes of its citizens, but to political actors on a local level, citing his home state of Abia as an example. Maduekwe acknowledged that the national People's Democratic Party (PDP) organization had a particular interest in setting the environment for free elections, saying that as the major party "we lose more" than other parties if elections are not credible.

14. (C) Maduekwe said that he encouraged leaders in the National Assembly to move forward with election legislation, telling them that inaction on the Electoral Reform Commission recommendations reflected poorly on Yar'Adua. Maduekwe noted that he will speak at the Council on Foreign Relations on November 30 to offer a "scorecard" for the National Assembly on election reform. He also offered that changing laws would not matter without political will of officials to refrain from or prosecute fraud.

15. (C) Carson pressed Maduekwe about removing Independent National Election Commission (INEC) Chair Maurice Iwu, arguing that Iwu presided over the flawed 2007 elections. Maduekwe acknowledged that the United States and UK had made their position clear about Iwu, but there were "bad ways of doing the right thing." Maduekwe described Yar'Adua as regarding the rule of law as paramount, saying that if Yar'Adua bypassed the required two-thirds majority vote of

the National Assembly and simply removed Iwu, Yar'Adua risked impeachment. It was better to simply wait until Iwu's term expired in June, Maduekwe said. Carson countered that the United States would not invest our prestige in Iwu's leadership, just as stockholders would not invest money in a failed company. Carson also noted the difficulties in soliciting financial and other support within the State Department, from other agencies, and on Capitol Hill unless there was a signal from Nigeria of change in INEC leadership. Maduekwe insisted that Yar'Adua had to be very strategic about such a change, since removing Iwu could hurt Yar'Adua politically. Maduekwe argued that by asking the United States and UK to assist Nigeria with elections -- to participate as more than just observers -- Yar'Adua made it clear that he has lost faith in INEC. Carson expressed the hope that influential elements of Nigerian government and society would come to a similar conclusion on the need for Iwu's early departure as a confidence building counterpart to international support for elections.

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CORRUPTION  
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16. (C) Maduekwe described Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Chair (EFCC) Farida Waziri as "energized" from her recent trip to the United States. He noted that Waziri secured the longest conviction of any official since the EFCC began. Maduekwe characterized privatization of state-owned industries as an "ideological weapon" to attack corruption, as it reduced nepotism opportunities for government officials.

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BINATIONAL COMMISSION  
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17. (C) Maduekwe argued that having standalone working groups on Elections and Anti-Corruption as part of the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission was unpalatable to Nigerians, since it implied conversations more relevant to a "failed state," and Nigeria was not like Afghanistan and Somalia. After listening to Maduekwe's depiction of the intended goals of these conversations as "good governance, transparency, and integrity," Carson acceded to Maduekwe's request that the two working groups be combined into one, with those goals as the title of the working group. Maduekwe noted that the elections portion of the new working group would be led by the Secretary of the Government but would have to include some participation from INEC. DeskOff noted that the USG and Nigeria had already agreed to the three other working groups: Energy and Investment, Food Security and Agriculture, and Niger Delta and Regional Security Cooperation.

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GUINEA  
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18. (C) AF Deputy Assistant Secretary Fitzgerald lauded ECOWAS's role in the current Guinea crisis, and suggested that Nigeria should offer political and military observers to provide an early warning and deterrent to violence in the event of a power vacuum. Maduekwe agreed with the need for such unarmed observers, and offered to raise the issue with Yar'Adua.

CLINTON